

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 95.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1855.

PRICE 1½d.

THE STORY OF A FAMILIAR FRIEND.

Still virginalling
Upon his palm.—SHAKESPEARE.

Our Friend is of ancient, though obscure origin. Nobody knows anything definite respecting the founders of the family; but the first name in the genealogy is of Latin derivation, and this carries conjecture a long way back into the past.

Our Friend has passed through many trials, and seen many conditions of life. None more aristocratic than he, in those good old times of which the romancists tell us. Then was he the guest of kings and nobles, and unknown, even by name, to the 'general vulgar.' His politics are changed for the worse since then: he has become a very democrat. He disdains not to be seen in the back-parlour of the petty tradesman, or the cleanly cottage of the intelligent mechanic. He raises his voice in the cause of progress; he advocates popular refinement. Very sad this, and very repugnant to the feelings of any right-minded and properly educated person. Not to be denied, however, as you will presently acknowledge.

The earliest occasion upon which we find authentic mention of Our Friend, is in some papers relating to the expenses of the royal household during the reign of King Henry VIII. He was known at this early period by the name of *Virginal*.

Very small, very shrill, very imperfect and feeble in every way, was Our Friend in the time of the Tudors. His voice was limited in compass to two octaves and a half, or three octaves; his now pleasant, jovial-looking ivory teeth were of gloomy tortoise-shell, or still more sombre ebony; his legs were slender and shaky, and his general demeanour unsteady.

A row of small quills, or 'jacks,' projecting through a series of little loopholes in a part of this intelligent machine then called the 'table,' caught the strings when set in motion, and produced a tone similar to that of a guitar-string struck by the nail of the player. These strings—one of which went to each note—were made in steel, iron, and latten. There were but few sizes manufactured; and the result was, that the differences of tone between every three or four notes were entirely dependent on the degree of tension—a state of affairs which would be utterly deplorable and unendurable to the well-educated ears of the nineteenth century, attuned as they are to the minutely graduated strings of modern instruments. In the treble, they were occasionally made of gold, silver, and even silk; but these were more readily affected by the weather, and less harmonious in tone.

To return to the matter of the state-papers. King

Harry, whose musical establishment was as ample as that of any other English monarch past or present, esteemed Our Friend so highly, that we find in these records an account of several payments made to 'players on the virginals'—yearly payments, too, ranging from twelve to fifty pounds; and the latter, be it remembered, was no inconsiderable annuity in those days. Besides this, the princesses Mary and Elizabeth loved and studied 'the touches of sweet harmony,' in their bowers at the palace of Westminster, and amid the quiet chambers of the old water-side residence at Greenwich; thus associating, by a gentler link than that of mere succession, two memories so dissimilar in popularity and reputation. That Mary I. played upon the virginals, we learn from a letter written to her by Queen Catherine, in which that royal lady, alluding to the divorce then in progress, counsels her daughter to cheerful resignation, and says: 'Sometimes, for your recreation, use your virginals or lute, if you have any.' Elizabeth was an accomplished performer. The volume known as *Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book*, composed by the leading musicians of her time, and triumphantly executed by those fingers which look so slender in the portraits at Hampton Court, is of insupportable and overwhelming difficulty. Music more impossible, more crabbed, more savage and implacable, cannot be conceived. A dozen of its pages would serve not only to crush the pretensions of any ordinary professor, but even to appal the bravest and most skilful among those spasmodic pianists who delight the concert-going public of this concert-giving age.

So great was the fame of her majesty's musical acquirements, that many authors have supposed the very name of the instrument to convey a complimentary allusion to the virgin queen; but our state-papers, before quoted, give sufficient proof to the contrary, inasmuch as the date they bear is anterior to that of her birth. Dr Johnson suggests, that it was so called 'because played upon chiefly by young ladies;' and a modern writer, with better judgment, ascribes its title to its uses; and reminds us how, in the pleasant twilight of convents and old halls, it served to lead sweet voices singing hymns to the Virgin.

Several virginals belonging to Queen Elizabeth, are yet extant in different parts of England. There is one, a very curious specimen, at Helmingham Hall, in Suffolk, the ancient and interesting seat of the Tolle-mache family; Sir E. B. Lytton is the possessor of another; and a third, perhaps the most remarkable of all, is preserved at the residence of a Worcestershire esquire. It was purchased at Lord Spencer Chichester's sale in 1805, and is of incalculable value.

We all love to adorn that which we dearly value: it is one of the commonest and gracefulest impulses of humanity. The written Bibles of old were cased in velvet, and clasped with gold and jewels. Petrarch's famous bronze inkstand was a model of the beautiful and ornamental in art. The delicious little painting, by Annibal Caracci, of Silenus teaching Apollo to play the pan-pipes, is said to have formed one of the panels executed by that great master for the decoration of his own harpsichord. Let us see, then, how Queen Bess, the haughtiest and most magnificent of monarchs, did honour to Our Friend. Right royally, as you may be sure. Here is the description of that Worcestershire virginal which we mentioned a few moments since:—'The case is of cedar-wood, covered with rich crimson-coloured Genoa velvet, and fastened with three ancient locks, finely engraved and gilt. The inside of the case is lined with yellow silk; the front is entirely covered with plates of gold. There are fifty keys, with jacks and quills; thirty of them are of ebony, tipped with gold; and the semitones, twenty in number, are inlaid with silver, ivory, and different kinds of rare woods, each key consisting of about 250 pieces. On one end are the royal arms, richly emblazoned; and at the other end is a symbolic and highly-finished painting of a crowned dove, with a sceptre in its claw—the painting done upon a gold ground, with carmine, lake, and ultramarine. The whole instrument is well preserved, light, and portable—five feet in length, sixteen inches wide, seven inches deep, and not exceeding twenty-four pounds in weight.'

Our Friend wears his court-dress in this portrait. He is almost too dazzling to be looked upon, and only to read of his splendour puts one in mind of the riches of Solomon's Temple.

Arrived at such dignity—having, as it were, touched the highest point of all his greatness—we meet little mention of Virginal after this period. One *Spinnet* seems to have usurped his place and fortune. In a quaint and somewhat dull volume, written by a French priest called Mersennes, printed in 1635, and entitled *Harmonicorum Libri*, we find a fanciful biography of the new instrument. Comparing the structure of the spinnet to that of the human body, he says that the sounding-boards are the muscles; the cross-bars, the bones; and the strings, the organs of speech. 'The spinnet had ordinarily forty-nine strings, of which the lower thirty were made of latten, because that was strongest and deepest. The higher ones, nineteen in number, were of steel and iron. . . . There were but six or seven sizes of strings; but if the spinnet were made in real perfection, there would be strings of different sizes, suited purposely to every note. Even in the length of string the makers were careless, and nearly everything depended on the tension.' Another writer tells that 'there have been spinnets made with the keys split in two, to furnish that nice gradation of quarter-tones attained on the violin. The difficulty of the instrument was, however, quadrupled by this, and the effect unpleasant.'

Let us not be deceived by these innovations of name and make; the Spinnet, after all, is but Our Friend in a new dress. He has travelled since we last heard of him; has crossed the Alps, and there learning that *spina* was the Italian for thorn or quill (of which, we may remember, the jacks were made), he has straightway appropriated the word for his own proper title, and, like some musicians of our own times, returned to Old England as a distinguished foreigner, in search of the patronage which is, as a foreigner, his due. From this time forth, we are not sure of him for a moment; he is in a state of perpetual mutation and improvement. Like Richard, he can 'change shapes with Proteus,' and always 'for advantages.'

As Monsieur *Clavecin*, alias *Clavier*, alias *Clavicembalo*, alias *Clavichord*, we next encounter him.

His compass extends now to four, and sometimes to four and a half octaves. His shape, horizontal and triangular, is that of our modern grand pianoforte—a harp, in fact, played by keys and jacks, and laid down in a case. Some attempts have been made to produce a greater softness of tone. A pig's bristle has been substituted for the crow-quill (answering to the ancient plectrum) which originally formed the tongue of the jack; and in a curious little treatise called *Musurgia seu Praxis Musica*, written by Ottomarus Luscinius, a Benedictine of Strasburg, we read that 'the clavichord is used by the nuns in convents; and, in order that the players on it may not disturb the sisters in the dormitory, the strings are muffled with small bits of fine woollen cloth.' All honour to the ladies of the German convents! They have suggested an improvement of infinite worth, and afforded Our Friend an opportunity of once more changing his style and title, and of appearing before us in the character of *Manichordion*.

The manichordion resembled in form the square pianoforte of fifty years ago. It was long and narrow; the sounding-board took up half the length of the instrument, and the lid was inlaid with coloured woods, or decorated with a quaint painting on the inner paneling, or sometimes domed like the lid of a hair-trunk. The leading peculiarity of the manichordion, however, was the first regular adoption of the long strip of red cloth under all the strings. This ingenious contrivance softened that asperity of tone which had been so distressing in the virginal, spinet, and clavier, and remains an indispensable item in the construction of the pianoforte of the present day.

We have by this time become so used to the transformations of Our Friend, that when he appears before us under the name of *Harpsichord*, we are past being astonished, and recognise Brainworm through all his disguises. Besides, the change brings him nearer to us and to our own personal experience. The very name of harpsichord is 'familiar in our mouths as household words.' Did not all the Scharissas, Chloes, Melissas, and Flavias of those dear old novels in ever-so-many volumes, which, as children, we discovered in a bandbox in the garret, and devoured so eagerly and surreptitiously, sitting up in bed, before the nurse-maid came to call us in the morning—did not those unimpeachable heroines all play upon the harpsichord as a matter of course? And then, do we not ourselves remember that frail querulous instrument which stood in a recess in our grandmother's parlour, and was only unlocked as a great favour and upon particular occasions! The case was of some light wood, inlaid with ebony; the keys were worn and yellow, and many quite dumb; and an ingenious device, representing a lute, flageolet, and music-book, surrounded by a wreath of dogroses and convolvuli, very distinctly painted, adorned the front panel just under the music-desk. Inscribed along the windings of the blue ribbon attached to the lute were the words: 'Ruckers Fecit. Antwerpen.' Ruckers was one of the best makers of the eighteenth century, ranking with Phillip Jones, Tabel, and Geronimo of Florence.

The harpsichord derived its name from the harp, being strung entirely with wires—two to each note. A single harpsichord was, in fact, a double spinet. The double harpsichord was an improved, extended, and powerful instrument, with two rows of keys, and three strings to each note. Of these three, two were tuned in unison, and the third sounded an octave higher. The latter was abolished by Merlin in 1770, and replaced by another unison, which left the tone equally full, and rendered the instrument less susceptible to atmospheric influences. Many experiments were essayed at this time, to soften still further the jarring tone produced by the action of the quill. Tongues of leather, ivory, and various elastic substances, were tried, but without

any material success. What was gained in sweetness was lost in brilliancy; and the grand desideratum was left to be attained by the valuable invention which here forms the most interesting epoch in Our Friend's biography, and gave to us, in the *Hammer-harpsichord*, that noble and expressive instrument with which we are all so familiar under its later name of the *Pianoforte*.

As in many more illustrious cases, the honour of discovery is, in this instance, ascribed to no less than three persons, the earliest of whom, one Castofali, an instrument-maker of Florence, is supported by the *Giornale d'Italia*, and stated to have accomplished his design in the year 1711. The Germans, on the contrary, claim the invention for J. C. Schröder or Schreuter, a native of Dresden, in Saxony, and an accomplished organist. The *Monthly Magazine* for December 1810 advocates the cause of this claimant, stating that he had made a model instrument, whereof the strings were struck by hammers, and had, in the year 1717, presented it for the royal inspection at the court of Dresden. The third and last candidate is Bartolommeo Cristofori of Padua. He is warmly seconded by the Count G. R. Carli, an elegant and thoughtful writer of the last century, who relates that he (Cristofori) originated the improvement during his stay in Florence in the year 1718. The essay on music—to be found in the Milanese edition of Carli's works, published in eighteen volumes, 1784-7 A. D.—contains the following spirited passage:—'From the organ we pass readily to the clavicembalo—an instrument always progressing towards perfection, and much improved by Bartolommeo Cristofori, a Paduan, who added hammers to the mechanism; of which great invention we are so forgetful that we have even believed it a new thing, bringing it here from Germany and England, and receiving it as an unique production of those fortunate regions which are destined to illuminate us with our own Italian lights. Thus is it that we have never known how to preserve any single thing for our own honour.'

Be the inventor which of these he may—and we are strongly inclined to believe that the laurels belong to Schröder—it is at all events certain that the object of centuries was at last accomplished. The quill, pig's-bristle, thorn, ivory-tongue, leathern-tongue, and all other twanging abominations, were for ever banished. A tiny hammer, clad in chamois or other soft leather, was made to fall upon the string, and evoke a clear, precise, and delicate tone unheard before. The harpsichord had become an instrument of percussion, and it only remained for later manufacturers to perfect, extend, and popularise the pianoforte.

The first seen in this country was made by one Father Wood, an English monk at Rome, and by him sent over to Mr Crisp, author of the tragedy of *Virginia*; a gentleman of considerable taste and learning, who sold it again to Fulk Greville, Esq., at the price of 100 guineas. Every one who heard the new instrument was delighted. No spinet, clavier, harpsichord, or other variation of the virginal, had been made capable of any modification of tone. The hammer-harpsichord obeyed the soul of the player, and, according to the pressure of the skilful finger, passed through every gradation of *piano* and *forte*. The new effect gave rise to the new name—a sufficiently feeble and inexpressive one for so fine an instrument—and it shortly was known to all the dilettanti of London as 'Mr Greville's pianoforte.' One imperfection remained, and that imperfection was in the touch. Unlike the jacks, of whose 'nimble leap' Shakspeare, in his sonnets, has preserved an imperishable memory, the hammers moved slowly and with difficulty. Only the gravest measures could be played upon the pianoforte; and to give these their due effect, a sustained sound, such as the organ alone can afford, was absolutely necessary. Nothing, however, was attempted to repair this defect

till after several years, when Plenius made a pianoforte, in imitation of the first. The touch of this one was better, but the tone worse. Backers, a famous harpsichord-maker, next took the instrument in hand, and made several; but they were little superior to the old harpsichords, and found no favour with the public. It is probable that such repeated failures might have discouraged the trade, and that the pianoforte would have been, if not wholly forgotten, at least put aside, and preserved, even to the present day, as a mere curiosity in music, had not an event occurred at this juncture which gave an impetus to every branch of the art, and awoke the ingenuity as well as the ambition of all the performers and manufacturers in England. The illustrious John Christian Bach, organist, pianist, and composer, arrived in this country, and established that series of concerts which first made familiar amongst us the grand classical music of the German schools.

Every harpsichord-maker now tried to render the pianoforte practicable and popular. The failures were many; and it was not till 1766, that a German named Zumpé succeeded in the construction of some small pianofortes (similar in shape and size to their remote progenitor the virginal), whereof the tone was peculiarly sweet, the touch facile, and the price sufficiently moderate to place it within the reach of all those who had hitherto been purchasers of the harpsichord and clavier. A revolution the most sudden ensued in every musical household in the kingdom. Zumpé could not meet the demand, and orders more numerous than he could execute poured in from all parts of the United Kingdom, and even from the capital and northern shores of France. Pohlman, although his pianofortes were of inferior tone, made a fortune by supplying those who could not obtain the instruments of his more skilful contemporary. Stoddard and Broadwood next entered the field, and in their hands the pianoforte acquired with every year fresh brilliancy, facility, and power. The compass was extended to six octaves—the prices varied from 30 to 200 guineas—the instrument began to be, what it still is, the most universal, the most useful, and the most remunerative, both to seller and purchaser, in the world. One more invention—one last improvement—was yet needed to complete the action of the hammer upon the string, which, wanting the elasticity to rise again immediately, rested too long, and dulled the vibration of the note. This ultimate nicety of mechanism was attained by no other than our graceful English poet Mason. He loved music and his pianoforte; and after bestowing some thought upon the subject, came to the conclusion, that the desired effect might be produced by detaching the hammer from the key, so as to give but a momentary concussion. Thoroughly to comprehend the delicacy and aptness of his invention, you but need to open your pianoforte and remark the manner in which sounds are produced. At the first touch upon the ivory key, the little hammer swings lightly in a semicircle, as if wielded by an invisible hand—falls, rises, and leaves the string to vibrate to the last pulse of sound. This alone was needed to perfect the expressional powers of the instrument, and since then, no real or material improvement has been effected. True, many freaks and whims have been started from time to time. A pianoforte with pedals has been tried, and found wanting. We all remember that ear-rending and infinitely distressing anomaly, the fiddle-piano, in the American department of the Industrial Building of 1851, wherein a violin, connected by mechanism with a second row of keys, played a dismal unison with the right hand of the performer, and put every listener out of spirits for the rest of the day. Then there are transposing pianos—repetition pianos—patented pianos, with hard names of unknown derivation, which few people know anything about, and which nobody ventures to pronounce—

pianos of seven octaves in compass—pianos adorned in richest carvings, built of costliest woods, and illustrative of all the wealth, ingenuity, and tastefulness of the age—better still, little Quaker-like pianos of white wood, fine tone, and most modest price, built (on the suggestion of *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal**) by a maker who stands at the 'head and front' of his trade, and by him offered to the public of small means—the needy clerk, the poor teacher, the upper-class mechanic. This last is the very test and triumph of the pianoforte—as glorious a transition in its degree, from the time of the rare and royal virginals, as is the daily press and cheap literature of the nineteenth century from the darkness of that time when a scholar transcribed the classics with his own hand, and the parish-bible was chained to the reading-desk in the middle of the church.

We have not time nor space to say more, though much more might still be said of the future and the past, especially of the future. We should not be sorry to see pianofortes still more cheaply wrought, and finding their way more frequently into the poorer walks of life; and we should hail a reform in the class of music and style of performance which has of late years become popular, for we are weary of reveries, *pensées* nocturnes, caprices, and other 'sickly imaginings' of the modern pianoforte school. We should rejoice to see music regarded less as a mere matter of course in female education, and better loved for her own heavenly sake. But with great good, small evil must creep in; so let us be patient though some charlatanism has been consequent upon the progress and perfection of an instrument which deserves our truest gratitude and affection, which celebrates our happiest, and soothes our saddest hours, and to which none amongst us can refuse the name of Our Familiar Friend.

TRACINGS OF ICELAND AND THE FARÖE ISLANDS.

THE GEYSERS—AN ERUPTION—RETURN TO REIKIAVIK.

THIS night passed in much the same manner as the last. Happening to awake about three o'clock, and feeling restless, I rose and walked up to the tent. The sun was already an hour above the horizon, and, a gentle west wind having set in, the weather had become both beautiful and genial. One of the tent-party was already astir, and told me that an eruption had last night taken place, less than half an hour after we had retired. Here was a disappointment for the majority of the party, for of course it became less likely that we should be favoured with another explosion before our departure. My friend informed me that it had been a magnificent spectacle, far exceeding the eruption of the Great Strokr, and he had been enabled immediately after it took place to examine the interior of the basin, which is always on these occasions left for a little while empty. He at the same time shewed me the handkerchief which had been sunk in the well of the Geyser on the preceding day. It had been thrown up in the eruption, and found in the state in which I saw it—namely, half torn to pieces—a curious evidence of the violent operations which go on in the recesses of this wonderful water-cavern. Having now lost nearly all hope of seeing an eruption, I retired once more to our sleeping-chamber, and lay down again. At six, I once more rose, and went up to the field of the Geysers,

contemplating nothing but to make a few preparations for our journey. As I approached, behold an immense quantity of steam fills the air. There are hurried cries from one or two persons. To my delighted surprise, the Great Geyser is actually engaged in one of its eruptions! I got to the spot just in time to see it at the height of the paroxysm.

The prominent object before me—the ground of the spectacle, as an artist might call it—was the vast effusion of steam covering the place, and rolling away under a varying wind. It was only on coming pretty near, and getting to windward, that I caught the sight of a multitude of jets of water darting in outward curves, as from a centre, through amidst this steam-cloud, glittering in the sunshine for a moment, and then falling in heavy plash all over the incrustated mount. It seemed to me—though the circumstances are certainly not favourable for an accurate estimate—that these jets rose about sixty or seventy feet above the basin. Three or four of our party looked on excitedly from a little distance beyond the reach of the water, but half-concealed amidst the steam. It went on jetting thus at brief intervals for a few minutes, and then gradually ceased. When I could venture up to the brim of the basin, I found the water sunk down a few feet in the funnel; so I was able to descend into that beautiful chased and flowery chalice, and break off a few specimens of its inner lining, now partially dry by reason of the heat communicated from below. The rest of the farmhouse-party came one after another upon the ground, to express their vexation at so narrowly missing this fine spectacle, as well as that of the preceding evening.

When one contrasts the terrific violence of the explosion, lasting as it does only a few minutes, and usually occurring but once in one or two days, with the tranquillity manifested by the Geyser at other times, it becomes a curious question how such explosions take place. Sir George Mackenzie's theory is, that steam is gathered in some cavernous recess connected with the subterranean channels through which the water rises; and that when it has accumulated there till such time as the pressure overcomes the resistance, it bursts forth through the tube, carrying the water before it, and tossing it high into the air. Professor Bunsen, who spent eleven days beside the Geyser in 1846, has announced another theory, founded on the changes which take place in water after being long subjected to heat. In these circumstances, water loses much of the air contained in it; the cohesion of its molecules is greatly increased, and a higher temperature is required to boil it. When water in this state is brought to the boil, the production of vapour is so instantaneous and so considerable, as to cause an explosion. Now, it has been found that the water of the Great Geyser at the bottom of the tube has a temperature higher than that of ordinary boiling water, and this goes on increasing till an eruption takes place, immediately before which it has been found so high as 261 degrees Fahrenheit. Observations to a similar effect have been made in regard to the Great Strokr. This peculiarity—for so it is, seeing that in ordinary circumstances the hotter water at the bottom would rise to the top, till all was equally warm—shews that the heating of the water in the Geyser takes place under extraordinary circumstances. As far as I understand Professor Bunsen, he implies

* See *Pianos for the Million*, in No. 306, and *Occasional Notes*, in No. 334 (2d series).

that the great pressure of the column above, and perhaps some mechanical impediments to free circulation in the form of the Geyser, give these required circumstances. Such being assumedly the case, there is an increase in the cohesion of the molecules of the water constantly going on at the bottom, at the same time that the heat is constantly increasing; at length, the latter force overcomes the former—ebullition takes place—an immense volume of vapour is instantaneously engendered, and an eruption is the consequence. The former may be called the mechanical; the latter, the chemical theory of the Geysers. I must leave others to say which is the most plausible. There are other difficult questions, particularly as to the infusion of silica contained in the water, and the source of the mud or clay which we see boiling in so many of the Geysers, and deposited in such vast quantity around the extinct ones on the hill. I must not launch into these questions; but I may remark, that the resolution of the rocks of the district into such matters under such circumstances, seems to me calculated to form a valuable study to the geologist, as tending to illustrate many of the early changes of matter on the earth's surface.

The air being much clearer to-day than formerly, we could see beyond the nearest range of hills. Unable to visit Hecla, which is thirty miles from the Geysers, on the other side of a dangerous and unbridged river, we had been very eager all the preceding day to get at least a view of that celebrated mountain. We were now gratified with a sight of its triple and snow-covered summit, peering over the low hills on the opposite side of the valley. It is usually thus covered with snow, so as to present nothing to the traveller beyond what he could see on any mountain of similar elevation. It is only once in a long lifetime that the Icelandic sees it in action as a volcano—the last time being in 1846.

At nine o'clock, our party set out on its return, after paying about seven shillings to Thorver for the grazing of the forty horses during the two days. The vacancies left in our boxes by the declining stock of provisions were fully filled by the spoils of the Geysers, of which each person had appropriated a greater or less quantity. Under a bright sky and a high temperature, we started in one cheerful group, leaving the guides to bring up the baggage and other horses at their convenience. Scarcely ever but in Italy have I seen a more beautiful day than this. The heat in some places was almost oppressive. After a few miles, pausing at a *bye*, or farm, to get a drink of milk, we found a couple of travelling-horses standing tied together, head to tail—one being saddled for a man, the other for a lady, and the latter having a showy cloth laid over it. The quietness of the two animals, under an arrangement which so completely forbade any sort of movement, was edifying. Our wit said it was a good deal like matrimony in some of its aspects. The travelling-lady by and by made her appearance, and proved to be a pretty young woman, dressed rather elegantly, but with only a sailor's glazed hat upon her head. The gentleman, who was her brother, entered into conversation with some of our Danish friends, and asked with eagerness for news of the war in the Black Sea. He spoke with fervour against the Russians, and said if he had the czar here he would hang him. I cannot say I felt any surprise at so truculent a sentiment, not merely as harmonising much with the British view of the late czar as a great malefactor, but as expressive of the general feeling of the north of Europe regarding the Russians. Wherever I have been in Norway, Sweden, or Denmark, I have heard but one expression of fear and wrath regarding that encroaching, intriguing, and unscrupulous power.

At this place we found an old woman, of a diseased

and fatuous appearance, set out at the end of the house to enjoy the air. She was, I believe, an example of a disease called *lepra*, peculiar to this island, and attended by great swellings and ulcerations. Whether it be exactly the same ailment as the ancient leprosy, I cannot tell; but there can be no doubt that it is a result of the same causes—namely, deficient conditions in food and air for healthy life. Our photographer afterwards had an opportunity at Reikiavik of taking portraits of two persons thus afflicted. In the existing circumstances of Iceland, cut off from general intercourse with other nations, and dependent on one other country for supplies of grain, it is not wonderful that there are great deficiencies of aliment amongst its people. But, supplied as we are with all necessities we can pay for, it is scarcely possible for us to imagine what privations our neighbours in this solitary isle are exposed to. Only a few weeks before our visit—bad weather having prevented the arrival of vessels at the usual time—there was a kind of famine in Iceland, inasmuch that the governor's own family experienced a deficiency of bread. Perhaps, however, the disease in question is less directly owing to want than to filth and bad air. All the winter through, an Iceland farmer's family, including servants, spends the greater part of its time, night as well as day (so far as there is a day), huddled up in one stifling apartment, where the atmosphere becomes so polluted, that a stranger entering from the open air can scarcely meet it without sickening. One consequence of this is often remarked upon—namely, the indifference of the people to some points of the moral law; but it is of scarcely inferior importance that the spending so much time in air unfit to arterialise the blood, poisons the springs of life, and physically deteriorates the population. The tendency of all modern observation in hygiene has been to shew the paramount importance of healthy respiration, even over wholesome and sufficient food.

At noon we reached the Brór, which, having fallen a little during the two past days, seemed not quite so formidable as before. While we rested on the opposite bank, the native gentleman and lady came up, and dashed into the stream with a nonchalance that cooled a little the airs we had been inclined to give ourselves for not hesitating about so difficult a ford. In the course of our forenoon ride, we met a considerable number of parties of natives, nearly all of them on the return from Reikiavik with fish and articles of merchandise. Some which we passed on their way to that place, were carrying packs of wool, to be exchanged for merchandise. Six, ten, or a dozen horses went in a row, so laden, conducted by two or three roughly dressed men or women, also mounted; the women being in some instances mounted simply on a higher saddle than the men, so as to allow their feet to hang down on each side. Every such cavalcade affected me more or less painfully, under a consideration of the disproportion between the amount of the goods carried, and the number of human beings and animals required for carrying them, marking as this did the low and primitive state of all industrial organisation in Iceland, and the exceeding poverty which must be the unavoidable consequence. It was at the same time an interesting study to a historical mind, as a living reflex of the condition of our own country in times not long past; for certainly in Scotland, it is not yet more than a century since packhorses were employed for the transport of all kinds of heavy articles.

At three o'clock, we reached Utlé, a *bye* on the banks of Apa-vatn lake. While the bulk of the party rested there for an hour on the sward, enjoying the hot sunshine, I strolled down to the lake-side to see a set of geysers whose steam had attracted our attention on our outward journey two days before. It was a highly curious and interesting scene. There are two groups of geysers here, on the beach of the lake, and

divided from each other little more than a hundred yards. In each case, within the space of perhaps a quarter of an acre, there is a multitude of small apertures, crusted with silica, and each boiling with all its might, the water in some instances firling up a foot or two into the air. Beside a good active caldron in one of the groups, an old woman from the bye was quietly established with her tub, using the hot water which jetted up by her side for the purification of her clothes. In the other group, which was the more interesting of the two, I counted thirty boilers in full work, blurring forth hot water, which flowed over the incrustated sands into the lake. One of them, formed of two apertures close together, and shewing large cavernous bores, projected water two feet high in one continuous stream, which, splashing out on all sides, was evidently forming a basin of the same character as that of the Great Geyser. The other apertures were mostly very small; some so much so, and with such tiny jets of water, as to look like so many little tea-kettles on a fire. So much petty fuss, and fume, and splutter, had in it an element of the droll, at which I could not help—solitary as I was—falling a-laughing, and that heartily. There was at the same time much to fix the grave interest of the scientific inquirer, in the way in which the silicious matter was disposed round the orifices. The style of the incrustations evidently depends on how the water behaves. Where it quietly runs, the silica is deposited in thin flakes, forming a laminar crust. Where it falls in a splash, a cauliflower-like crust is formed. I apprehend, when the lake is full to its banks, all this scene of natural ebullition takes place under water.

The people of the bye supplied us with some good fresh milk, which only wanted being free of black specks of dirt to be entirely acceptable. As we reposed on the grass in the powerful sunshine, with our steeds grazing near by, the families of the place came out and sat down beside us, regarding us with a stupid wonder and interest. There were one or two good faces among the children, but the majority looked like persons to whom neither nature nor circumstances have been kindly.

In the evening, as we were approaching Thingvalla, the fine Italian weather was suddenly exchanged for a cold easterly drizzle, which made us arrive at the end of our day's journey in no comfortable state. Our good friend the parson had been so kind, however, as prepare a large dish of trouts for our supper; and he once more received the senior of our party into his humble manse. The night passed exactly like the former one at the same place. Once more we stretched ourselves in that narrow chancel, with that curious miniature burlesque of church-furnishings around us. The only difference to me was the accidental one of my having a parallel sleeper of somewhat larger growth beside me on this occasion than on the former one: small as the difference was, it caused me to be so thoroughly jammed—owing to the exceeding narrowness of our space of flooring—that I had to plead for a change of arrangements in the middle of the night.

In the morning, which was drizzly and uncomfortable, though not strictly cold, the priest came to see what he could do for us. We asked him a few questions as to his family and other circumstances, and learned that he has a wife and eight children, besides a step-daughter. His parishioners, about a hundred in number, are extended over so wide a space, that he has a preaching-station at the distance of eighteen miles, to which he travels once a month. His honorarium amounts to twenty-five pounds of English money. 'Decimis inclusis?' I asked. 'In toto,' replied he. 'Habesne agellos aut fundum?' 'Non.' 'Habes equum?' 'Imo, bonum equum.' We could not but wonder how so large a family, besides a horse, could be supported on means so small. In wandering about the

place, I lighted upon his little stithy, which reminds me to tell that in Iceland a priest is always able to shoe your horse, if required.

LIFE'S UNDERCURRENT.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

MY next residence was with a young couple, who had only one child. They had come together both equally poor, but by means of economy and industry, had furnished their little home, and were still adding to the stock. I was here quite happy for several months; for it was the abode of peace and love, until the domestic hearth was darkened by intemperance. The husband, who, for love of his wife, had forsaken his old associates, soon after I became their lodger gradually began to resume his evil habits; at times coming home late and intoxicated. At first, the wife used tears and gentle remonstrances. He listened to her complainings mildly, and promised amendment; but his former habits overcame his faint resolution, and then his deserted wife could only weep in secret, and watch with an aching heart for his return. Often in the cold winter-evenings she would watch for hours, while her baby slept.

At length poor Helen's complainings were met by vituperation; and then followed strife. She became melancholy and dejected; her former tidy habits gradually faded away, for poverty began to pinch with his iron grasp. In the same tenement, there were several females in poor Helen's situation; and these came to condole with her, and talk over their sorrows. Drink was resorted to as a consolation and solace; and the unfortunate Helen soon became its victim, and more its slave than her husband. My home for some time had become very uncomfortable from their squabbles; yet I was loath, on the poor baby's account, to leave the house, for what I paid for my board and lodging was the only money Helen could depend upon when Saturday came round. Article after article had been pledged; even her own and husband's dress. At length it became altogether unbearable: blows were exchanged by the wretched pair, and I left the house. Soon after, James enlisted in the army, and left his children to the care of a drunken and degraded mother, made such by his own misconduct.

Month after month passed on, and I was happy and content. As my earnings increased, so did my wants and expenditure. At the end of each week, I was never much richer or poorer than I was at the commencement of the month. I had no desire to change my situation in life; I looked upon labour merely as the means of supplying my wants, for ambition had not yet entered my breast, nor thought of change. The present hour was all I cared for, until one afternoon I met a young man in a warehouse for which I wrought; and although much changed, I at once recognised him as one of the old inmates of the garret when I lived with Annie. He was the son of a basket-woman, and at that time assisted her by selling matches. The recognition was mutual, although I was in my working-clothes, and he dressed like a gentleman, and transacting business with the firm. Our meeting was cordial, and an appointment was made to visit him at his hotel in the evening after business-hours.

We met, and talked over what had happened to us since the days of our wants and privations. He had, when his mother died, been sent to the charity-work-house; from thence to the Lanark cotton spinning-mills, where he learned to be a spinner, and was, with

the other children, sent to school at over-hours. Being of quick parts, he attracted the notice of his superiors, and, by patient good conduct, was promoted step by step, and his salary increased. He was now a confidential agent, by economy had saved several hundred pounds, and was at this time in treaty with a company who were about to commence business, in which he was to be the acting partner. On hearing all this, I could not help feeling as if fortune had dealt unkindly by me, compared with him. The night following was a sleepless one, for I turned over and over in my thoughts project after project to better my circumstances; but all alike appeared hopeless except one. At length my mind was made up, and I slept soundly.

The whole of next day, as I sat at my loom, I thought of my last night's resolve; and the more I thought, the more I was pleased, and the easier it appeared of accomplishment. I had often heard that there was no way of acquiring money but by saving; and my plan was, to spend no more of my wages than what was absolutely necessary, and to avoid company in public-houses, where a great part of my earnings had hitherto been consumed. I commenced with good-will; wages were fair, and trade brisk. My aim appeared distant, but reason told me it was sure; and at the end of a few weeks I was surprised at the progress I was making, and regretted the sums I had needlessly spent. At length I reached the first stage. One Saturday evening I made up the sum of ten pounds, the lowest the banks would receive as a first deposit; and with a feeling of pride I went on Monday to the office, and felt I was already a man of some importance as I read my receipt.

None of my acquaintances knew what I was doing with my money, and often bantered me for not joining in their revels as I was wont. The only indulgence I allowed myself was the purchase of a book at one or other of the stands, for I felt lonely in my room after being used to company; and so I soon acquired a taste for reading and amusing information. I at first thought I might, like Roy, turn a miser; but mine was not the lust of money for its own sake, but as the means to attain an end: my object was to accumulate a small capital, and become a master like Edwards, my old associate the spunk-boy. It was emulation that urged me on; it was a race of life, and he had got the start; but the field was open, and my heart beat high with hope as, month after month, the chances of success became more and more apparent.

I was residing with a respectable widow in the Gallowgate, where I had been for several months, when a new lodger came to take up his abode with her. I was struck with his appearance on the Sunday when I first saw him. He had evidently been in better circumstances, for his clothes were made in the extreme of fashion, although now threadbare; his manners and address were above those of a mechanic; and he had a look of bygone dissipation, with a fixed melancholy in his expression. During the two weeks he had been in the house, his hours had been most regular, and he was always strictly sober when he came home to his lodgings.

It was the third week before any intercourse took place between us. The landlady had told me that the poor lad, as she called him, appeared broken-hearted, and this made me feel a certain interest in him. She had lent him one of my books during my absence in the day, and replaced it on my table before my return. One evening I had come home rather sooner than usual, and was sitting at the window, when she came and requested the loan of one of my books for Mr Kennedy. I told the good woman to inform him that he was welcome to any of them, and I should be happy to have his company on any evening, either in his own room or mine. From this time, a night seldom passed without our meeting. I felt happy in

his company, and learned much from him, for he had been well educated, and possessed a soundness of judgment quite new to me.

One evening, he came home more depressed than usual. I knew he was out of a situation; but this evening there was a wildness in his manner and fierceness in his eyes that almost alarmed me for his safety. I inquired what was the matter; he made me no answer for some time, but paced the room. Having said all I could to soothe him, he came and stood by the fire, his elbows resting on the mantel-piece, and his face covered by the palms of his hands.

'Graham,' said he at length, 'I feel and thank you for your kindness; but I am a ruined man: nothing can redeem the past. I am now drinking the dregs of my cup of folly, and their bitterness I can no longer endure. I have placed a gulf between me and my future prospects I see no mode of overleaping; my fellow-men have put a ban upon me. I have been after two situations to-day, both of them far below my former standing, and have been rejected: on one application, I was rejected rudely; on the other, with taunts and insult—and I am here alive to tell it! I feel that my bad fame follows me, yet I have long renounced my folly; for months I have not tasted anything stronger than water, and I am resolved never again to put within my lips the insidious destroyer of my once bright prospects. Graham, I that had hundreds of my own, and at this moment have not five shillings in the world. I am unfit for laborious outdoor work; I have no trade; I am useful only in a situation of trust, where steadiness alone is required. Dishonesty was never laid to my charge, yet I am a ruined man; and were it not my early education, I would put a period to my misery this night.'

I looked at him with pity and surprise; for his feelings of repentance and remorse I could not comprehend—they were strangers to my breast. I could look back upon my past life with thankfulness; it had been of continued progress and increasing comfort; I had nothing to repent of or regret. I said all I could to soothe him and inspire hope; but my words, I could perceive, fell cold on his ear. When we parted for the night, he took my hand in his, and thanked me for my kind endeavours.

The following evening, I found him in my room, if possible more depressed than he was the one before. Anxious to know something of his former history, I turned the discourse to the ups and downs of life; and, in hope of his being equally communicative, I told him my own story. He for some time seemed to wave the subject, but at length spoke out.

'My father,' said he, 'was a merchant, not wealthy, but far above want, with a thriving business, created by his own care and industry. I was the youngest of three, a brother and sister; our parents were most kind and indulgent, but my father was strict in enforcing all religious observances, for he was an elder in the church. Well do I remember that the Sabbath was a day of privation and suffering to us; and I am now ashamed to think how often, with my brother and sister, I mourned its return. How quick are children to observe and reflect! I was often, when very young, in my father's shop, and at times saw him praising goods to a customer I had heard him tell my mother were not what they ought to be; and, young as I was, my mind whispered—can my father tell lies? Once, a poor widow, whose husband had lately died, was pleading with him for a little forbearance, until she was enabled to pay a small sum she was indebted to him; he spoke very harshly to her, yet he had read the evening before the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, where, in the twenty-second verse, it says: "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child." I would not mention such things, were it not for the baneful effects they had on

my young mind at the time, and the blight their impression cast on my riper years.

'As I grew up, my tasks lessened, but the same restraint continued; my brother and sister died young, and my mother, when I was nineteen years of age. Even after my father had made me a partner in his business, he still looked upon me as a child: from his austerity, he had never gained my love; and I obeyed him only as a soldier does his commander. To the world, I appeared as religious an attendant of the church as he was; but, alas! my heart was not there; I was almost, if not wholly, a sceptic, for I was not the least under the influence of religion.

'At my father's death I was left my own master, and dreams of coming enjoyment and freedom floated before me. I was now sole owner of a thriving business, with a few hundreds in the bank; and I did not all at once throw off the mask, for the restraint I had been reared under acted as a check for some time, so that it was not without many severe struggles I fell away altogether. But fall I did. Gradually my Sunday relaxations, as my companions and I called them, began to encroach on my week-days; I employed others to do for me what I ought to have done for myself; my business began to decline; and my income was unable to support my extravagance. The money my father had left was all spent; bills came upon me I could not meet; my place of business was shut up by my extravagance and carelessness. My creditors found it was more through my own mismanagement than any necessity that my affairs were so involved; but I was sequestered, and a trustee appointed, who, after winding up my affairs, paid my creditors in full, and handed me a small sum. Upon this, by dint of economy, I have subsisted ever since; but all is now gone, and I am plunged in want and degradation.'

When Kennedy and I parted for the night, I began to turn over in my mind how I could be of service to him, for he had introduced me to arithmetic, and I was now doing questions in Practice under his teaching. The next morning, I wrote to my friend Edwards in Kennedy's behalf, giving an outline of his history, and saying all I could in his favour; and on the following evening, when I came home, I received an answer, stating that he would give him a trial, if his appearance pleased him, as the firm at that time required a clerk. His appearance!—there was the rub, for it was shabby-genteel; and I actually hesitated as to whether I should tell him what I had done. For my own credit, after what I had said, he must at least appear respectable, and I saw no other way of his doing so but by my advancing him money to buy clothes.

To break upon my hoard was to me a matter of serious consideration; it was like upsetting my own aims. I thought over all the instances I had ever heard of money lent and never repaid; and an old rhyme ran strong in my mind—

I once had money and a friend,
By both I set great store;
I lent my money to my friend,
He was my friend no more.

If I had my money and my friend,
As I had once before;
I'd keep my money to myself,
And lose my friend no more.

I had almost hardened my heart, and was humming the misanthropic words when Kennedy came into my room; but his melancholy, heart-broken look dissolved at once my prudent resolves. I handed him the letter; and as he read it the tears started into his eyes; he took my hand and actually kissed it; but soon the glow of hope gradually faded from his face, and his eyes wandered over his threadbare dress, and his almost japanned hat which he had laid upon my table.

'Do not be cast down, Kennedy,' said I, 'I did not recommend you without being able to carry you through; and as to your appearance, I will lend you as much as will make that respectable: I know you will repay me as soon as you can.' He uttered no word—he made no promise—but I felt a warm tear drop upon my hand, which he still held in his; the pleasure I felt was worth all I had in the bank. How strange are the turns of fortune! Charlie Graham, the poor gatherer, lending money to a rich merchant's son! Next day, I got him equipped, and he set off in the stage-coach to present himself to Edwards, the old poor-house orphan. I had the pleasure to hear, in a day or two, that he was engaged; and in a few months after, I received a letter from Edwards, thanking me for having recommended Kennedy to him, who before this time had repaid me the money I had advanced.

From the period Mr Ross had taken me under his charge, I had been prosperous and happy. I was now in my twenty-fifth year, and by steadily adhering to my rule of economy, I was gradually nearing the aim of my ambition—to have one hundred pounds in the bank, and all my own. While comfortably situated, I never changed my lodgings, and I still wrought in Mr Ross's shop. But the cares of riches were beginning to assail me. How could I quicken the increase of my store—how turn my wealth to the best advantage? I sometimes lost an hour or two of sleep in ruminating on this subject.

One of my fellow-lodgers was from the country, steady, sober, and saving like myself, without being penurious; he was clerk in a warehouse for which I had long wrought, and the partners of which were reported to be very wealthy. One evening I spoke to him on the subject which occupied my thoughts, considering him well qualified to give me advice. When I mentioned the amount of my fortune, he told me: 'It is far too small a sum to commence with on a scale to pay well, and you shall be plunged into all the miseries of a poor master without capital. I myself,' he continued, 'have saved a greater sum than you, and I get better interest, for I receive five per cent.' I inquired where. He told me his employers gave that for money on loan, and that all his was in their hands; and he had no doubt they would give me the same for mine. The temptation was great, and I thought not of the risk, for they were reputed wealthy. (One or two banks had stopped payment about this time, and those who had money in others were very uneasy, and many withdrawing it.) Next forenoon, I went and offered what I had in the bank to the company on loan, at five per cent.; it was accepted, and I endorsed my bank-receipt to them, and got their bill at a short date. I went to my trunk, and placed it in safe deposit, pleased with my morning's work.

Happy and content, on I worked, and added to my store. I felt the desire to increase it come stronger and stronger upon me, and I regretted when I had to purchase any necessary I required, even clothes and shoes: I was becoming a miser. I had mastered one hundred pounds, and all my anxiety was to make that two. I was the first and last in the workshop, and the most industrious; for my only pleasure was adding to my store. Guthrie, my friend, was still my fellow-lodger; but he seemed to me to keep the even tenor of his way, careful but void of any extreme desire to increase his wealth. Another of those fluctuations in trade came upon us, and several of the houses in town had become bankrupt. I felt very uneasy, but was not actually afraid, until one evening Guthrie came home very much depressed. I saw there was something wrong with him, and inquired what had happened.

'Graham,' he replied, 'I hope all will end well; I hope it will.'

'What do you mean?' I inquired in great alarm, for the safety of my money flashed upon my mind. I

rose and strode through the room, my eyes fixed upon him: I feared to receive his answer.

'Our house,' said he at length, 'has this day received notice of the failure of two firms in New York, with whom we have had transactions to a very large amount for some years back. I know that in the spring we sent off large consignments, for which we have had no remittances. My employers are very uneasy, and I am sure the balance is heavy against us; but I am in hopes that we can meet our engagements. Since we received the information, we have been busy making out a statement; but I have not learned how the balance stands, or the amount of our liabilities. We have hopes that remittances are on the way. As the intelligence of the failure is only from report, I hope our house will stand the shock. In the present crisis, I cannot think of lifting my money, but you may, without the feeling that hinders me.'

I felt stunned and bewildered: this was a turn in my affairs I had never dreamed of. We parted for the night, he leaving me in the most uneasy frame of mind I had ever been in. When I had nothing to lose, I cared not for to-morrow; to-morrow was now a day of immense importance to me. I slept none that night. On the next forenoon I presented my bill, and requested payment. I was told it was inconvenient at present, but in a few days it would be honoured. With a heavy heart I left the warehouse; I had no alternative. I thought not of work, for I could not have settled to it. In the evening, Guthrie called, but he was far more depressed than the evening before. The first question he asked as he entered my room was, if I had got my money. I replied that I had not.

'Graham,' said he, after a pause, 'I care not so much for my own loss, as I am grieved that I was the cause of you placing your hard-earned savings in the hands of our house. The partners are strictly honest men, but unforeseen circumstances have involved them in ruin. They themselves will lose double the amount of their greatest creditor—aye, ten times. To-morrow, they will be declared bankrupt, and what dividend their estate will pay, I have no means of learning. We are both hurled back to the point at which we began to save money, and must commence again.' His words fell upon my mind like sudden darkness; I knew not what to think, I was so overpowered. The only consolation I had was, that I was not myself in debt; I owed no one a shilling.

There is wisdom in bearing misfortunes patiently, but this is in general awaiting at the time it is most required: such was my case, and I walked about the room until fatigue caused me to sink into a chair. In my folly, I thought it was vain for me to save money, for my doom was poverty and toil. I had a few pounds in my chest, and, instead of returning to my loom, I went to the public-house, where I sat and endeavoured to forget my loss in the stupefaction of intoxication; and day after day I continued this process, till I sunk into the lowest stage of misery and degradation. Repentance and good resolutions would succeed in the morning, only to be thrown aside in a few hours; for as the effects of the debauch died away, the craving became unbearable, and I renewed the intemperance of the day before. I was like a fascinated bird, whom the eye of the snake was upon. I knew my doom; I mourned, and strove; but drink, the serpent, had me completely under its power. I was now far more wretched than when I wandered through the streets with the good Annie. I was then only poor, for I was innocent and pious; now, I was equally poor, but without the innocence and peace I then enjoyed. Such was often my state of mind—for I was now penniless and almost in rags—that, in the delirium of intoxication, I went to the river to throw myself in and end my misery: but before it came to this, my constitution,

naturally strong, gave way, and I lost my senses for a time.

When I awoke to consciousness, I found myself in the public hospital, weak as an infant, and my mind calm and serene as if I had awakened out of a sleep in childhood. My sight was so weak, I could not endure the light, and I closed my eyes, and began to reflect; the whole events of my life passing in rapid succession before me, from the garret with good Annie, to the green by the river-side where consciousness left me. Bitter regret came upon me, but it was void of the remorse I had felt before. I may now say I first prayed, for it was the sincere outpourings of my heart. I made resolves of future amendment, and to return to my loom, never more to taste the cause of my degradation. But how was I to get out of the hospital, and again appear in a decent manner in the streets? The thought of this depressed me much, for my clothes were in rags, and my shoes deserved not the name. With a bitter feeling, I at length put on my almost mendicant garb, and was about to leave the hospital, when, to my surprise, I saw Guthrie enter the ward. I blushed as he approached: he did not cordially take my hand as he was wont, and I saw he eyed me with a cold look of pity. I felt humbled and abased—I could not look him in the face.

'Graham,' said he at length, 'I am sorry for you, but I bring you good news. The affairs of our house have been so far wound up that there is a certainty of its paying above ten shillings in the pound. I have been retained by the trustee at my old salary, to assist in winding up matters; so you may rely upon my information.'

Joy took possession of my mind; I told him of my regret at the mode of life I had lately followed; my firm determination to abandon my evil courses; and the shame I felt in leaving the hospital in my present garb. He at once said he would lend me five pounds on the security of my dividend, and I with pleasure accepted his friendly offer, and slept that night with a mind at ease.

The first use I made of my recovering strength, was to call upon my friend Mr Ross. The good old man was happy to see me, as he was wont to be before my career of dissipation. I laid open to him the sorrow I felt for my past conduct, and my resolve to avoid it for the future; and in a few days, I was seated at my loom, and continued steadily at my occupation without a wish to alter it. At length I received from the trustee on the bankrupt estate payment of my dividend; the amount was fifty-seven pounds, and I placed it in the bank with the few pounds I had saved since my reformation. I once more enjoyed a tranquil mind, and no longer thought of my loss. Mr Ross, who was now an old man, and had become very frail, began to speak of giving up business, and living upon what little money he had saved, as he had no children of his own alive. I inquired what sum he expected for his looms and business. He asked whether I knew any one likely to purchase them. I smiled, and said: 'Perhaps I may be the person myself.' He looked at me with amazement. 'Say you so, Charlie; where did you find the purse?' For neither Mr Ross, nor any one of my old shopmates, knew that I had saved money, or that the loss of it had been the cause of my backsliding. I told him I had some cash in the bank, but I feared not sufficient. 'I am happy to hear you say so,' he replied. 'As I do not require the money to be paid all at once, get whom you please to value the articles, and you shall have them at the price named. If you have not sufficient, I will not distress you for the balance; you can pay it by instalments, at your convenience.'

Thus was I set up at last, the master of a business, and escaped from that *undecurrent of life* where so many glide, and writhe, and perish. I don't know much yet about what are called the upper ranks; but it occurs to me, that even they will look with some

curiosity, if not interest, on these details of what is going on in the depths below them. The things and persons I have described are all real, and all types of classes more or less populous.

TABLE-FORKS, HISTORICALLY HANDLED.

'I OBSERVED a custom in all those Italian cities and towns through the which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nation of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy.'

So writes the old English traveller Thomas Coryate, in that book of his, quaintly entitled *Crudities*, and published in the year of grace 1611. In 1608, Thomas has been travelling through France, Italy, Switzerland, and parts of Germany; and in his *Crudities* appear the results of the tour. But what is the unique custom which Thomas has observed in Italy, and to a knowledge of which he introduces his British countrymen in the said year of grace 1611?

It is neither more nor less than the use of forks at table. Thomas Coryate is struck, and amused withal, by the observance in Italy of a custom which he believes—and he is an experienced traveller—not Christendom at large can elsewhere shew an example of. Hear him detail the prandial phenomenon: 'The Italian, and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, do always at their meals use a little fork when they cut their meat. For while with their knife, which they hold in one hand, they cut the meat out of the dish, they fasten their fork, which they hold in their other hand, upon the same dish; so that whatsoever he be that, sitting in the company of any others at meal, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meat with his fingers from which all at the table do cut, he will give occasion of offence unto the company, as having transgressed the laws of good-manners, inasmuch that for his error he shall be at least brow-beaten, if not reprehended in words. This form of feeding, I understand, is generally used in all places of Italy; their forks being, for the most part, made of iron or steel, and some of silver, but those are used only by gentlemen.' Honest Thomas Coryate was quite taken with this new-fangled curiosity—for a curiosity it was to him to all intents and purposes—and as a curiosity he put it down in black and white for the amusement of his readers. 'And the reason of this curiosity is,' he goes on to say, 'because the Italian cannot by any means endure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all men's fingers are not alike clean.' Very right, too, thought Thomas. So, when he got back again to the White Cliffs, and was set down before the roast-beef of Old England, in that self-same year of grace 1608, forthwith he resolved to naturalise that Italian exotic, by planting it on his own table: and he did so. And men saw, and marvelled; some thought it a good idea, and others voted him an affected

Snapper up of unconsidered trifles;

and all, with one consent, all England over, called him *Furcifer* for his pains. *Furcifer*, the fork-bearer; such was the famous 'style' bestowed on Thomas Coryate, the first man who ever used a table-fork in Great Britain.

We can fancy the Latin sobriquet, with its why and wherefore, mightily relished by King James, partaking without fork, whether iron or silver, of his regal repast, and cracking jokes, right regal and pedantic, at the expense of *Furciferous* Thomas, and to the delectation, as in duty bound, of his majesty's faithful and forkless guests. Records of royal fare, during that illustrious reign, are existing in abundance; and we are to suppose the monarch and his friends in every instance without table-forks, disposing with a good-will now of

venison pasty, now of Paris pie; anon, of 'roast kidd, wholl,' or of 'boyled carpe, hot;' in a trice, again, of 'chines of salmon, broyled,' or 'roast mutton with oysters,' or 'sweet breade pie,' or 'marled smelts,' or 'sowased pigg;' then launching into an ocean of sweets and goodies, in the shape of quince-pie, candied-tart, musk-poor paste, orange-comfit, almond-leach, &c.—all amid much smacking of lips and clatter of knives, and—no, not forks. We can fancy his majesty leaning back in his chair to have his laugh out, as some courtier, of satirical temper and literary taste, proceeds to quote the finale of Thomas Coryate's chapter on forks as follows:—'Hereupon I myself thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meat, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home, being once quipped for that frequent using of my fork by a certain learned gentleman, a familiar friend of mine, one Mr Lawrence Whitaker, who in his merry humour doubted not to call me at table *Furcifer*, only for using a fork at feeding, but,' Thomas carefully adds, 'for no other cause.' As Robert Southey's mother was jeered in the streets of Bristol for carrying an umbrella, as a mere effeminate innovation, so was *Furcifer* Thomas, and so were his first disciples, *furciferous* and few, derided as finical coxcombs in books and on the stage. 'Your fork-carving traveller' is finely flouted in Beaumont and Fletcher; and Meercraft, in Ben Jonson, thus complains to Sledge and Gilthead:

Have I deserved this from you two? for all
My pains at court, to get you each a patent.

Gilthead. For what?

Meercraft.

Upon my project of the forks.

Sledge. Forks! What be they?

Meercraft.

The laudable use of forks,
Brought into custom here as they are in Italy,
To the sparing of napkins, &c.

Beckmann, to whom we owe our information on this as on so many other matters, in the *History of Inventions*, after remarking that in France, at the close of the sixteenth century, forks even at court were entirely new, and that they had not found their way into Sweden, adds: 'But it must appear strange enough that Thomas Coryate, the traveller, should see forks for the first time in Italy, and in the same year be the first person to use them in England—from which circumstance he was facetiously nicknamed *Furcifer*.' In Italy itself, we are told, the use of forks was first known about the end of the fifteenth century; that is to say, during the latter years of Lorenzo de' Medici and his brilliant associates, while Charles VIII. was king of France, and the first of the Tudors reigned prosperously in England. A certain Italian, Galeotus Martius by name, who resided at the court of Hungary in the reign of Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490 A.D.), informs us, in his memoirs of that turbulent prince, that at that period forks were not used at table—as they then were in many parts of Italy—but that at meals each person laid hold of the meat with his fingers, whence ensued an unpleasant assimilation of the said fingers to the colour of the duck's-foot, on account of the 'much saffron then put into sauces and soup.' The writer praises Matthias Corvinus himself for his kingly knack of 'eating without a fork, yet keeping up the table-talk meanwhile, and never smearing his clothes.'

Attempts have been made to shew that the ancients must have known and used table-forks, or something equivalent; and dictionaries are appealed to, and Greek and Latin nouns-substantive are thence adduced, to prove the point. Does not the Greek word *kraagra* mean a fork?—we are asked. Does not Athenæus (author of those amusing *Noctes*)—do not he, and Pollux, and Capella, mention *kraagra* among kitchen-utensils? That may be; as a large flesh-hook, to-wit, for the cook to use in

hauling up a mass of boiled meat from the pot; not at all as a table-fork, for civilised creatures to use in effecting the transit of food from plate to mouth. It was 'from hand to mouth,' very literally, that our ancestors ate and lived. So, again, the Latin words *furca*, *furcilla*, and others, may be translated forks, if you please; but then it is to the class of hay-forks, tridents, &c., not of table-forks, that they and their kind belong. Let it be borne in mind, however, that the food put upon the table of the ancients was considerably more 'tender' than what now-a-days vexes our digestion. Furthermore, that all articles of food were cut into tiny bits before they were served up, which was the more necessary, as the guests did not sit at table, but reclined on couches, in a posture that would not leave both hands at liberty. 'For cutting meat, persons of rank kept in their houses a carver, who had learned to perform his duty according to certain rules.' This carver, Beckmann adds, used a knife—the only one placed on the table, and which in the mansions of the rich had an ivory handle, and was commonly ornamented with silver. Bread was broken, never cut—being baked in thin cakes, like the Jews' passover-bread, or the oat-meal cakes of North Britain. Juvenal, it is remarked, when he wishes to describe stale dried old bread, passed off by a churlish host on his 'poor relations,' while his grander visitors are regaled on the baker's newest, finest, best—does not say that it could not be cut, but that it could not be broken:

Mark with what scorn that other deals your stint
Of bread in mouldy fragments hard as flint;
Fragments, your lab'ring grinders cannot bite;
But your lord's bread, how fair, how fine, how white!

But this is a digression from forks; suffice it to say, that had they been used by the ancients, evidence of such usage must have been hunted out by investigators so lynx-eyed as Björnsthål and Baruffaldi (*de armis convivialibus*); and although a silver two-pronged fork was found among rubbish in the Appian Way, and some articles were discovered by Grignon in the ruins of a Roman town in Champagne, which he pronounces table-forks, yet are the age and the use of these rarities considered doubtful, to say the least, by candid and competent judges.* Beckmann deliberately asserts, that neither the Greeks nor the Romans have any name for table-forks—'now so essential among polished nations, that the very notion of eating a meal without them excites disgust'—and that no phrase or expression which, with the least plausibility, can be referred to the use of them occurs anywhere in the literature of either people. He contends, with reason, that had table-forks been known, this ignoring of them wholesale could not have occurred, since so many entertainments are celebrated by the poets, or detailed by other writers; and that at least they must have been alluded to by Pollux, in the very minute and compendious catalogue which he has given of articles necessary for the table.

There is, on the other hand, a well-known couplet in Ovid's *Art of Love*, in which the poet, addressing a lady, lays down a rule as to the polite manner of picking her food with her fingers; which precept, a modern critic remarks, can scarcely be understood in the same ironical sense as one to be found in the writings of a later instructor in convivial gallantry, who advises that, in helping pigeons, the legs and pinions should be given to ladies, in order to afford them an opportunity of displaying their white and taper fingers in picking the small bones. 'The caution with which the Latin poet concludes, makes it plain that the fingers were used in his time not from choice, but from necessity.'

* It is worthy of remark, that Herculaneum has not furnished any of these utensils.

Even after Master Thomas Coryate had introduced table-forks amongst us, they must have worked their way very slowly into general use. They were still an object of waggery in 1647, when John Fletcher's *Queen of Corinth* was published, where the Tutor says, for instance:

Your T beard is the fashion,*
And twifold doth express th' enamour'd courtier,
As full as your fork-carving traveller.

Five years later—namely, in 1652, which is allowing more than forty years for Coryate's hobby to amble into notice—Heylin, in his *Cosmography*, alludes to forks as still a comparative rarity. Writing of the Chinese, he says: 'They are much given unto their bellies, and eat thrice a day, but then not immoderately; drink their drink hot, and eat their meat with two sticks of ivory, ebony, or the like, not touching their meat with their hands at all, and therefore no great foulers of linen. The use of silver forks with us, by some of our spruce gallants taken up of late, came from hence into Italy, and thence into England.' Heylin's derivation of that 'great fact,' our silver-fork school, from the chopstick system of the Celestial Empire, may be rejected without much scruple; but his evidence to the tardy advance of table-forks as a national institution, is valid and significant. To our illustrations of the infancy of their career, drawn from our own literature, let us add two others, in prose and verse respectively. Fynes Morison, in his *Itinerary* (1617), when relating the bargain he made with the master of the vessel which was to convey him from Venice to Constantinople, says: 'He gave us good diet, serving each man with his knife, a spoon, and a fork.' Forks must have been, and indeed were, in general acceptance among the civilised people of Italy by and before this period. The poetical fragment referred to will be found in the fourth act of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, where Sir Politick Would-be gives advice to Peregrine of a kind confirmatory of the foregoing remark:

Then must you learn the use
And handling of your silver fork at meals,
The metal of your glass (these are main matters
With your Italian).

The knight has met his friend in a street 'in the height of Venice,' and sees fit, himself an old traveller, to set down 'some few particulars, fit to be known of your crude traveller,' amid which as prominent a place is due to the 'handling of a silver fork at meals,' as the exquisites of Queen Anne's time ascribe to

The nice conduct of a clouded cane.

The use of forks at table seems to have been long considered a 'superfluous luxury.' They were forbidden, in common with other pomps and vanities, auxiliary to the 'pride of life,' in various convents and religious houses.

At the time Beckmann wrote, they were still a rarity in many parts of Spain. 'And even yet,' he observes, 'in taverns, in many countries, particularly in some towns of France, knives are not placed on the table, because it is expected that each person should have one of his own—a custom which the French seem to have retained from the old Gauls. But as no person would any longer eat without forks, landlords were obliged to furnish these, together with plates and spoons.' What Beckmann here traces to the old Gauls, is a custom until recently cherished by the modern Gael. 'Thirty years ago,' writes Dr Johnson, in his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 'the

* It being the characteristic of the gallant in question, that, among other 'humours,' he

'Stabs on the least occasion; strokes his beard,
Which now he puts i' the posture of a T,
The Roman T; your T beard is the fashion,' &c.
Queen of Corinth, Act IV., Scene 1.

Highlander wore his knife as a companion to his dirk or dagger; and when the company sat down to meat, the men who had knives cut the flesh into small pieces for the women, who with their fingers conveyed it to their mouths.' The good old Great Bear growls over such knives as he met with, as being 'not often either very bright, or very sharp.' Such accidents as *that* will happen, to this hour, even in well-regulated and silver-fork families. Meanwhile, furcifer is no longer a term of ridicule; people who ignore or repudiate forks are in a minority; the cause of forks is the cause of progress:

For we doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened;
and, as a corollary to that proposition, the use of forks is spreading

— with the process of the suns.

[The late Lieutenant-General G. R. Ainslie, author of a work on the Anglo-French Coinage, and who lived much in France after the peace of 1815, used to assert that he had seen the introduction of knives and forks, and many other needful utensils, into that country. During his residence at Bourdeaux, some English relations of his introduced the articles used in England for washing; and the general used to cause some merriment with an account of the puzzlement of the native gentry about a soap-dish, which some thought most probably a thing for making tea.—Ed.]

FRENCH TALES OF ENGLISH LIFE.

Our pictures of the French are clumsy enough, most likely; but they cannot be much worse, if so bad, as theirs of us. The Englishman usually hung up in their portrait-galleries, whether on the stage or in a novel, with his ridiculous hair parted in the middle of his head, clean from the nape to the forehead, curled *à la Titus*, and by no possibility ever disarranged, with his high collars cutting his ears, his straight back, his temperament of starch and bile, and his mania for suicide, is as little like the Englishman of England as that exploded type all beef and beer, and top-boots and corpulence, whom it pleased the last generation to gibbet as the model Briton. According to our 'lively neighbours,' as the phrase goes, we are a nation of melancholy eccentrics, who fly from our own country—all rain, and fog, and smoke as it is—at every opportunity, and who blow out our brains for disappointments not worth a child's tear. A profound disgust of life, a total incapacity for enjoyment, the concentration of all our faculties on the most absurd aims and ambitions—the ennui of idleness, and the insane squandering of fabulous wealth—this is the modern French notion of an English milord or baronet. *En voici les preuves*, according to M. Charles Newil, in his *Contes Eccentriques*.

Ephraim Wheat, Esq., goes to the club of Coventry in Piccadilly to see his friend and brother-in-law Tom Wild. His grave and sorrowful manner troubles young Tom, who asks him—'What is the matter, and is his sister well?' 'Mrs Wheat is in perfect health,' says lugubrious Ephraim. 'His little Mary?'—also: 'and his fortune?'—almost doubled since the last Epsom races. But a worm is gnawing at the root of all this prosperity. Ephraim Wheat, Esq., is known for the first pistol-shot in England; well, there is a man in America, one Joe Erickson, who can take six balls, and at fifty paces split them all on the blade of a knife. Ephraim Wheat is dishonoured, unless he can surpass this American; therefore has he left Durham so suddenly, intending to go on board the *Emerald* next day, and sail direct for Baltimore. There he will challenge Joe to a match of 2500 shots each; and if he,

Ephraim, does the best, he will get into the first ship returning to England; but if Joe is conqueror, he will hang himself. This is the programme detailed to the wondering ears of Tom Wild. Tom reasons in vain with the eccentric, urging on him his duty as a father, and telling him that he is a bad husband. Ephraim raises his eyes with a mild and resigned glance—who that has ever seen the stage Englishman can forget that look?) 'Oh, no,' he says; 'Mrs Wheat has the most beautiful diamonds, the most beautiful horses, and the most comfortable château in Durham;' and his conscience is clear. Tom thinks of a means of salvation. He will 'run' against Ephraim with the best horse of Lord Yarmouth, and, dishonouring himself as jockey at the Derby, will save his brother-in-law. A month after, 'Ephraim Wheat, Esq., in a gray jacket, leather breeches, and top-boots, galloped before the stand, inside, and five lengths ahead of Tom Wild, the only adversary. Tom Wild had lost two or three hundred guineas on the day, and had dishonoured himself as jockey with his friends the members of the Coventry.' Tom Wild again sacrifices himself; for Ephraim Wheat again becomes maniacal on the point of Joe Erickson. This time it is a boat-race at Greenwich. Ephraim Wheat appears in red flannel, and is deposited by four vigorous watermen in a long light boat, made of a single plank of mahogany bent by steam. Of course, he wins the race in this light skiff against Tom's outrigger; but this time, against that gentleman's will, 'whose brother-in-law's heart ceased to beat under the waterman's jersey.' A month after, Ephraim has another fit of Joe Erickson, who now cuts nine balls on his knife-blade! Tom Wild cries by St Georges, but he will go with Ephraim to America too. They set off an hour after for the Liverpool express; and finding that the *paquet-bot* goes only at six the next morning, enter a tavern on the quay, and 'make themselves served (out) with grog.' Tom Wild sits astride on a chair, when some one snores in the corner, and they see a kind of sailor 'done up' in a bear-skin lying on a bench. This is Joe Erickson. Of course, Ephraim and he challenge each other—fifteen dollars and the head of a nail at fifteen paces. Ephraim fires first, and the ball, grazing the nail, buries itself in the wall. The American loads his pistol; while ramming down the charge, the weapon goes off, and he falls with his face to the ground. 'In his trouble, Ephraim had charged and primed both pistols.' Tom Wild raised the unfortunate Joe, while Ephraim endeavoured to reanimate him; but it was too late—Joe Erickson was dead. 'Devil!' grumbled Ephraim; 'the charge was too tight; he would have missed the nail! I have no luck, mon pauvre Tom!' And so; finis.

Miss Cook is a grand-niece of the celebrated navigator. On the 19th of May 1850, a crowd of sailors, citizens, and *boobys* (sic; meant for idlers), press on the quay to see Miss Cook sail out of port as the commander of the pretty schooner *Hanover's Princess*. There she is, a tall woman en' cloped in an India-rubber paletôt, with a round hat of green felt on her head. This is the third time she abandons her château of Ravensburn to discover new worlds, and expose herself to all the dangers of an expedition to the arctic polar circle. Mr Snails is her lieutenant. The expedition is dangerous; Mr Snails speaks of the widows who will be made in England. 'Yes,' she says coldly, 'I have left them half a million in the London Bank to console them, in case things do not go so well as I hope.'

After about a fortnight, the provisions are all gone, and the men have the scurvy. There is a mutiny; but Miss Cook stands on the quarter-deck with her revolver charged, and a large barrel of powder by her side. The powder is, happily, only flour, and the crew laugh when the revolver, which Miss Cook fires

into the barrel, to blow them all up, only scatters white meal on the deck. The mutiny is changed into a fight with the Red Indians, the chief of whom is secured, and directed to be hung at the yard-arm by Miss Cook—taking a piece of Spanish liquorice from her tortoise-shell box as she speaks. The Red Skin turns out to be Slighter, a friend of Snails. He is saved, and carried off to Ravensburn in triumph, to exhibit himself as a chief of the Warens tribe. Miss Cook, always believing him a Red Skin *pur sang*, tires of her prize, and is about to condemn him to a coachman's livery, when he is fortunate enough to save her from drowning in a small piece of ornamental water in the Ravensburn Park. 'Slighter was three-quarters and a half footman, when he disappeared under the green water of the lake. Slighter Cook, Esq., came out of it with his wife'—whom, however, he neglects, when 'Laird of Ravensburn,' for 'the horses, the chase, and the gin.'

The Honourable Mr Belfast lives at Gravesend. He is there in the month of June 1852, and he calls to his valet Jim to remind him to admit only Sir Richard Linn, the Baronet Nithsdale, and Mr Clifton that night. Jim salutes the honourable member of the Chamber of Commons to the ground, and leaves the room. The honourable double-locks the door, and goes to the window, which he opens, to look out on the Thames, which washes the foot of his house. The tide was low, and the wall stood in the midst of a large marsh of yellowish mud. 'No, no—that would be unclean,' murmured Mr Belfast, speaking to himself; 'a gentleman cannot go in this manner.' Mr Belfast turns away, and seats himself before a rosewood table. He lifts up the cloth which conceals the articles laid on it: there are half-a-dozen small phials, labelled 'digitalis, laudanum of Sydenham, chlorhydrate of morphine, curare of Java, hydrocyanic acid,' a pistol, ready primed, and a pair of razors crossed in front of the pistol. For the Honourable Mr Belfast is going to kill himself that night because he is too happy; because he is young, handsome, healthy, rich, and married to a beautiful woman whom he adores, and who adores him. But the Honourable Mr Belfast thinks that this blissful state of things cannot always last; that he shall lose his hair or get a waist; and that it would be better for him to kill himself now in the plenitude of his prosperity than to live until its decline. His friends applaud his design; and, after shaking hands with them all, he goes back to his own chamber, where are his various weapons of destruction, but where he also finds a man trying to force his writing-desk. This is Lowel, a noted burglar, with whom the honourable enters into an animated conversation, which ends in his discovering that he is not so happy as he thought. Lowel fires a pistol out of the window, and the report loosens the tongues of the three friends. One says, that Lady Belfast will marry her cousin Henry, whom she has long loved; another, that his banker, Simon Maidel, is on the eve of breaking; and a third, that he, Belfast, was apoplectic, and would soon have died. Belfast, in despair, gives Lowel two thousand pounds, and signs a contract to enter into his band. They go to the Albany Hotel, Regent Street, and then Belfast commences his career. Every night he and Lowel go into a ditch on the Gravesend or Richmond Road, after having stationed along the road a dozen men with sinister countenances to give the alarm. The police always come, the whistle is always heard, and Lowel and Belfast have always a smart run across the fields, till the poor honourable is nearly dead with fatigue. After a week of this work, Lowel takes him to the Queen's Theatre—to the stalls—where he makes him pick up the handkerchief which he, Lowel, has just stolen from the pocket of Lord Kendal, one of his colleagues in the Chamber, and a friend. Belfast is forced to obey; but instantly afterwards he rushes

from the theatre in a state of despair, accusing Lowel of being a wretch, and declaring that he is the most miserable of men.

'Are you unhappy, Mr Belfast?' says Lowel smiling; 'give me your word of honour.'

'Yes,' groans the honourable.

'Ah!' says Lowel, 'and I am happy at it;' for now he was cured. It was all a plot between Lowel (who was the cousin Henry Fergusson, and had been married three years before Lady Belfast) and the three friends, to prove to the honourable that he was a fool to talk of blowing out his brains because he was happy.

Another English nobleman, Sir James Turner—'twenty-five years old, with eyes of ultramarine blue, flaxen hair, and cheeks fresh and velvety as Orleans peaches,' in love with Miss Mary Peebles, sister of Sir Georges Peebles—makes himself light-house-man at Holyhead, at thirty pounds per annum, all because he was in love with Miss Mary; and being dilatory, had put off asking Sir Georges for her hand, until she was engaged to Son Honneur Sir Edouard Hogson, who has superb hunting-grounds in Cumberland. At the end, by virtue of a feint of starving the whole party, who come 'promiscuously' to the light-house, Sir James supplants Sir Edouard, and marries Miss Mary—whom, by the way, he calls 'Miss' in the love-passages M. Charles Newil relates: 'Miss, I love you;' 'Miss, I have loved you for two years,' &c.

Lord Winkles, under the name and costume of the Indian Prince Nennemhin, rows a match against Gédéon Headdrig, and beats him, though Gédéon has an outrigger, and milord a wherry; he gains thereby three hundred pounds. Count Winkles is ruined, though the world does not know it, and lives now by betting. Barlett is his faithful servant, and Nichol Deik is his farmer. Nichol Deik has a wife, whom her two children, Gibby and Mock, call Mamma Edith, and who, when Lord Winkles goes to the Oracles to see her, is found making a 'pounding-pie' in a marmite. Lord Winkles has killed John, the father of Nichol Deik, by accident; and hence has devoted his fortune and his repentance to the Deik family. Even now, when almost a beggar, he gives Mock and Gibby two or three rouleaux of guineas, which he calls 'curl-papers.' The real Prince Nennemhin dies, and leaves Count Winkles a millionaire, whereupon he gives twenty thousand pounds to Mock and Gibby, and falls fainting on the sofa. 'Twenty thousand pounds to Mock and Gibby!' grumbled Barlett, taking a bottle of vinegar from the chimney-piece; 'ah! if this poor John had died of an indigestion of *pounding*, these two little rogues would be now gathering sea-gulls' eggs to live by.' So ends the story of Count Winkles, Prince of Nennemhin. With which, as being perhaps the most original of all, with the least 'couleur locale,' and with the wildest divergence from common sense, we may as well close our own paper, having nothing that can out-herod this last mass of absurdity.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE results of the meeting of the British Association at Glasgow, as was anticipated, prove it to be one of the most satisfactory that has yet been held. Glasgow may congratulate herself. Cheltenham is to be the scene of the gathering next year, with Dr Daubeny as president. A brief glance at the subjects brought forward and discussed will exemplify the progress made, and what may be expected. There were papers on the phenomena of heat, radiation, thermo-electricity, by those masters in science, Brewster, Joule, and Thomson—on correction of the compass in iron ships—on

magnetism and meteorology—obscure points in geology were elucidated, and it was shewn that 'observations of terrestrial temperature' might be useful in the 'investigation of absolute dates in geology.' The chemists mustered strongly: one of the most remarkable papers in their section was that by Dr Andrews, describing a 'modification of chlorine and bromine, analogous to the ozone from oxygen.' Messrs Lawes and Gilbert treated of 'some points connected with agricultural chemistry;' Dr Paterson, 'of the cultivation of sand-hills.' Mr Dobson had a paper 'On the Relation between Revolving Storms and the Explosions in Coal-mines,' which is to be printed in the next volume published by the Association. Reports have been asked for, and will probably be drawn up, on certain important questions: 'the employment of electrical lamp apparatus'—'supply of water to towns'—'naval architecture'—'boiler explosions'—and 'the prevention of smoke'—all of especial interest at the present moment. More than 300 subjects were brought forward, comprising matters which we have not space to enumerate. We can only add that the meeting broke up more than ever satisfied of its utility.

The working-season is begun again; our savans are coming back from their vacation rambles to resume their investigations. The School of Mines is alive with lectures: Chemistry, by Hofmann—Metallurgy, Mineralogy, and Mining, by Percy and Smyth—Natural History, by Huxley—Geology, by Ramsay—and Applied Mechanics and Physics, by Professors Willis and Stokes. Good names, all of them; honourable and helpful to the institution. In a report on the 'Mineral Statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for 1853 and 1854,' published by authority of the Geological Survey, the quantity of coal raised annually is stated 'to be nearly twenty per cent. more than the highest previous estimate.' To insure an accurate return, every coal-field was visited by competent individuals, who made personal inquiries on the spot. We gather further from the Report—which is the first of an annual series—that the number of blast-furnaces at work throughout the kingdom in 1854 was 555, which produced more than three million tons of iron, worth L.9,500,000. The total number of persons employed in mining operations was 303,977, of whom 8810 were females; and the value of the mineral produce for 1854 was L.28,575,922. There is good reason to believe that the publication of an annual report on 'mineral statistics,' as promised, will be highly useful and beneficial; and the more so that the iron manufacture is undergoing important developments in other countries. Since 1851, large beds of black-band ironstone have been discovered in Westphalia, and forty new furnaces are being built. In some places, as we hear, experiments have been made which prove that iron puddled with gas is superior in quality to that puddled in the usual way.

We hoped to have the pleasure of announcing, in our present sheet, the accomplishment of the telegraphic connection between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland; but the hope cannot be realised till next summer. Owing to stress of weather, the attempt made last month to lay the seventy miles of cable across the Gulf of St Lawrence entirely failed, after forty miles had been paid out. The failure appears to have arisen from the wire having been laden not on a steamer, but on a sloop towed by a steamer. The vessel became unmanageable, and was saved from destruction only by cutting the cable. As the distance from Cape Breton to the nearest point of

Newfoundland is but about forty miles, the success of a future attempt is hardly to be doubted.

In India, on the other hand, there has been a rapid extension of the telegraph, that seems almost wonderful—we refer to the 120 miles of wire extended from Calcutta to Berhampoor in ten days, in order that the speediest intelligence might be received at headquarters of the progress of the insurrection among the Santals. It is a remarkable instance of what can be done by well-directed activity. And, coming nearer home, we find the telegraph complete from Constantinople to Shumla, through Adrianople—total distance, 424 kilometres. All the posts were brought from Heraclea, on the further shore of the Black Sea; and the wire is stretched over the Balkans, and through trackless forests, where the timber, it is said, is of such a nature as to be quite unavailable. There are fifty-one guard-houses along the line, and patrols of horse and foot watch over the safety of the wire night and day. The instruments used are on Morse's principle, and of French workmanship. And here we may add, that the French government is about to introduce Morse's principle on all the lines in France—in other words, to supersede the needles and dial by the printing apparatus; the object being, that the Minister of the Interior may have a copy of every message sent, no matter on what subject. Despotism plays strange freaks at times; and this, if carried out, would seem to be one of them. What would railway-clerks in England, who are accustomed to joke and laugh with one another by telegraph, say to such an innovation?

It is important to know that the 'translator' invented by Mr Varley operates so happily, that a message sent by a Morse's instrument may be printed by an English instrument at the opposite end, or *vice versa*. Thus, the two systems may at any time become but one in practice; and a message despatched from London will be printed at Amsterdam or Berlin. The French, who have been making experiments on 1000 miles of wire, are going to try to print from Paris to Kamiesch, and are contemplating the discharge of projectiles by telegraph. Signor Zantedeschi, writing from Venice to the Académie and the Royal Society, says he announced the possibility of the 'simultaneous passage of opposite currents in metallic circuits' in 1829, and that he can now demonstrate it between two stations with only one wire. We hear that Mr Wheatstone has some ingenious contrivances ready for experiment, among which is the sending of thirty messages at one and the same time.

M. Grosley has submitted for consideration a description of a plough to be moved by wind, offering to verify his statements by a model which was exhibited for some weeks at Passy. Another inventor describes a submarine explorer, which illuminates the bottom of the sea, and enables a diver to work with facility at any depth; and he talks about a wagon to travel under water. M. Chenot, whose metal-sponges we have noticed as remedial in cases of suppuration, bleeding, or ecchymosis, has found a remarkable effect produced by the compression of spongy metals. He tells us: 'Three grammes of silicium in the spongy state, having been submitted to a pressure equal to 300 atmospheres, exploded with a fearful noise; the fragments of steel from the broken matrix penetrated several millimetres into a plate of cast iron; and the body of the hydraulic-press, which was twenty centimetres in thickness, was broken, although the safety-valve was open—thus shewing the violence of the shock. The action was entirely from above downwards, since no portion of the upper part of the compressed metal suffered in the case described.' Here is something for the consideration of those who are experimenting on the power of explosions. M. Biot shews that one of the uses of the Great Pyramid of Egypt was to mark the equinox and solstice; the rays of the

sun at its rising or setting fell on the northern or southern face of the edifice, as the periodic changes occurred. Having come to this conclusion by theory, he requested M. Mariette, the explorer at Memphis, to make an observation at the Pyramid, and, notwithstanding the dilapidations, the phenomena are still noticeable. From this fact, M. Biot argues that the Egyptian priests must have known how to trace a meridian and its perpendicular, in order to be able to place the Pyramid.

MM. Frémy and Cloez have extracted and isolated the blue colouring-matter of flowers—a highly delicate operation. It is not indigo, as was supposed; they call it cyanine. It is turned red by acid vegetable juices; and they find it in certain roses, peonies, and dahlias. Viale and Latini of the University at Rome have, as they believe, confirmed the supposition, that the odour of plants and flowers was due to ammonia—the odour being good or bad according to the proportions in which the ammonia is combined. From this it is shewn that plants are doubly beneficial; by absorbing ammonia, as well as exhaling oxygen. We must, however, remark, that some chemists dispute the accuracy of these conclusions.

In a paper on the water of the Seine, M. Peligot throws out the notion, that water as well as the vegetable kingdom has much to do in the absorbing of carbonic acid. The balance between animals and vegetables is commonly held to be complete and harmonious; but when it is remembered that volcanoes eject as much carbonic acid in one year as would be respired by more than 500,000,000 of men, we may believe, so thinks M. Peligot, that water exercises an important, and hitherto unrecognised, function in its absorption. In all his analyses, he finds from two to three per cent. in the water of the Seine; and if it be found in anything like the same proportions in other rivers, and in lakes, the theory may fairly be taken on trial.

Both makers and consumers of gas may be interested to know that the emperor has had a small gas-factory erected in the grounds of the palace at St Cloud, for the purpose of determining the best and cheapest methods of producing gas. The result is an imperial decree, ordering the amalgamation of the six companies which now supply Paris with gas, the removal of all their works to a distance beyond the walls, the laying of their pipes in the drains wherever practicable. The price to the city and the military establishments is to be fifteen centimes the cubic metre; to private houses, thirty centimes. The company will have to pay a tax or *octroi* of two centimes the metre on all that enters the city, which, as Paris consumes more than 30,000,000 cubic metres annually, will amount to a considerable sum. This decree is to come into operation on the 1st of January next.

The Statistical Congress, which has just held its sittings in the hall of the Corps Législatif at Paris, under the presidency of M. Rouher, was attended by 250 of the most eminent statisticians of Europe; among them Dupin, Chevalier, Chadwick, and Farr. They met 'to discuss and agree upon common subject-matters of fact of statistical inquiry, and common modes of obtaining them.' There is good work to be done in this way, and the Congress may prove of real service, for there are many social questions which can only be decided by enlightened discussion. Some of them have been taken up by M. Le Play, chief engineer of mines, in his work entitled *Studies on the Labours, the Domestic Life, and Moral Condition of the Working Populations of Europe, &c.* He has seen many varieties of labourers and artisans, from Spain to Siberia, and is in possession of 300 monographs of the condition of families within these limits, which he uses as the basis of his book, seeking to establish 'what are the intellectual elements of satisfaction or moral happiness which families are called to enjoy.'

The Physical Society of Berlin offer a prize of 250 thalers for an 'Experimental Determination of the Mechanical Equivalent of Heat.' The question is one of first-rate importance, seeing that it involves a theory of heat more in accordance with the facts than the one which has long prevailed. The view now held is, that heat transforms itself into mechanical force, and, reciprocally, mechanical force into heat. Thomson and Joule, in this country, and Regnault, in France, have discussed and developed it to results which are no less astonishing than useful; and too much encouragement cannot be given to attempts at further developments and determinations. The papers are to be sent in before the middle of January 1857.

Agassiz is about to publish his *Contributions to the Natural History of the United States*, in ten volumes, quarto, each of 300 pages, and with twenty plates, at the rate of a volume a year till complete. From such an author one may predict for the work the fullest success. And Nott and Gliddon, two eminent American savans, have brought out a book, *Types of Mankind*, highly interesting to ethnologists. They discuss the question, with all the lights that modern science and discovery have thrown upon it, as to the single or multiple origin of the human race; and, influenced perhaps by the public opinion of their country, they conclude the black race to be in all respects inferior to the white. In a report on the book drawn up for a learned society in Paris, there is a reply to this point: the reporters admit the inferiority in a scientific and political point of view, but without drawing from it the same consequences. 'We believe,' they say, 'that this inferiority is compensated by the remarkable development in the negro of all the sympathetic faculties. And, far from admitting this race to be eternally devoted to slavery, we think that in the new era towards which nations at the present day seem to be progressing—an era of labour, of peace, and of sympathy—the black race is called to fill a part not less important than the white race.' The same opinion, they add in conclusion, is put forward and defended with as much reason as eloquence in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

CAPTURE OF WHALES IN WESTMANNSHAVN BAY, FARÖE ISLANDS.

It was a most curious sight, and the scenery was well calculated to set it off to advantage. The bay is about three miles long, by three-quarters of a mile broad, and surrounded by steep rugged mountains, which looked particularly gloomy in the sombre twilight. Between the whales and the outlet to the sea, fully sixty boats were collected together, with crews of six or eight men each, who were lying lazily on their oars; while about a hundred natives on either side were employed in dragging a net of ropes, some 500 yards long, across the entrance. This net is only used in Westmannshavn, where there are no sloping shallows upon which to 'drive the whales; it is, of course, not intended to catch them in, for no net could be made sufficiently strong; but it is supposed to retard their escape when they attempt to get out to sea. The boats were the ordinary ones in common use; the only difference observable in them being, that they had now lances stuck upright, like masts, at the stem and stern, and attached to the benches by several fathoms of rope.

More boats came dropping in for some time after our arrival, until at eleven o'clock we counted the number up to ninety; so that, including the men on shore, not fewer than 800 must have been present—all of them dressed in the rusty-brown jackets and black knee-breeches of the country, with as much uniformity as a regiment of soldiers. The net was drawn further and further up the bay, great care being taken to avoid frightening the whales, which swam quietly before it, or rolled about at their ease, evidently quite unconscious of danger.

When matters seemed approaching to a crisis, our party separated. Each of us got into a boat, and stood in the bows with a lance in our hands ready for action, and the fray commenced. Half of the boats remained outside the net to support the buoys; and the remainder, about fifty in number, including ours, closed round their prey, and drove them, by shouting and throwing, towards the shore, the animals tamely submitting until they got close to it. They then turned, evidently in great alarm, and bore down upon us, looking most formidable, and surrounded by a great wave, which their impetus carried with them. Not knowing how the boats would behave, we tyros awaited the charge with no small misgivings, under an assumed air of great calmness. The natives, on the other hand, became frantic with excitement, yelling like maniacs, splashing the water with their spears, and seeming about to throw themselves into it in their intense desire to head them back. All their efforts, however, were to no purpose. The whole herd broke through our ranks, though they were severely speared in passing. Many of the boats were lifted half out of the water in the collisions; while the cries of the boatmen, mingling with the loud blowing of the whales, made a wild and not inappropriate chorus, which rang through the surrounding hills. When clear of us, the animals continued their career at the same rapid pace, and came in contact with the net, which they carried back, as well as all the line of boats supporting it, several yards; and in a few seconds escaped, either under or through it, leaving a few of their number entangled in its folds, lashing the water up twenty and thirty feet high, in their desperate struggles to disengage themselves. In the end, they all got away, and swam half a mile out towards the sea, when they dived under the water, and remained nearly a minute out of sight. We then pulled after them as fast as we could. The scene resembled an enormous regatta, with a herd of whales as the turning-buoy; and by dint of stones and shouts, they were headed back, again speared, and again broke through all the barriers opposed to them.

This operation was repeated three times. At last, much wounded and harassed, they were forced into a narrower part of the bay. All their enemies pressed round them at once; and the animals, either wild with fear or completely bewildered as to the direction of the sea, dashed towards the shore, carrying many of the boats with them in the rush. On a flatter beach, they would all at once have been stranded; but this was so steep and rocky, that after two or three minutes' mêlée, during which the boats and whales were all mixed up together in one fighting, struggling wave, only one-third of them were killed, and the remainder reached deep water again. The real sport was, however, over, and what followed was merely a sickening, though useful, piece of butchery, in which we took no part. Those which were not taken, having lost their leader, never reunited, but rolled, groaning in the bay, quite blinded in their own blood, and thus fell victims in detail to their pursuers. When a whale is sufficiently wounded and exhausted to be manageable, a boat is run alongside, and one of the men strikes a hook into the blubber, attached to a strong rope, by means of which the rest of the crew hold their boat fast to it, while a knife, stuck deep in behind the head, soon terminates its sufferings. Others, on shore, hook and despatch the whales which get aground in the same manner. After the herd was completely broken up and separated, we landed, and, from a commanding cliff, viewed with advantage the strange spectacle below. The bay was, without exaggeration, red with blood: some boats were towing dead whales on shore, others were spearing the few remaining lively ones; while all round the beach, men, up to their necks in the water, were actively engaged in the great work of slaughter. Occasionally the boatmen would hook one more lively than they supposed it to be, which would tow their boat rapidly about, or break away from them, or lie lashing up clouds of water in its agony. Not a single fish escaped. The few that had an opportunity of doing so, returned in search of their leader, and shared the fate of their companions; and in two hours from the commencement, the whole 212 were destroyed.

—*Cruise of the Yacht Maria, 1854.*

S O N N E T.

BY MARIE J. EWEN.

Il fato,
Credi, è tremendo, perché l'uomo è vile;
Ed un codardo fu colui che primo
Un Dio ne feci.—V. MOSTI.

WITH high-souled Monti, cowardly I deem
Him who first made a god of destiny;
For our 'life-statue,' I believe, may be
Shaped from the shadows of Youth's earnest dream,
So rainbow-wreathed with many a fairy gleam—
Until it rise bright as that fantasy,
A thing of light, all beautiful and free,
In front of earth and heaven. Thus it should seem
That he who steadfast stands through good and ill,
Who yokes blind Fortune's coursers to his car,
Who through strange failures works untiring still,
Until all adverse powers are driven far,
Shall conquer Fate through the resistless will,
And rise crowned victor o'er his evil star.

CHINESE CURE FOR CHOLERA.

One morning, after having said mass, I felt symptoms of cholera. I had a difficulty of breathing amounting almost to suffocation. A cold so intense took possession of my arms and legs, that I could not feel a hot iron applied to them. Just then, a Chinese Christian came in to see me, and as soon as he looked at me he said: 'Father, you have the cholera.' To be certain, however, he looked under my tongue, and, observing the peculiar blackness of the veins there, he remarked that, unless I applied a remedy speedily, I would not live until night. I told him to do what he could for me. He took an ordinary pin, and began pricking me under the tongue until he drew out from ten to twenty drops of jet-black blood. Then, after rubbing my arms gently, he tied a string very tightly about each one of my fingers, and pricked each one on the outside at the root of the nails until he brought a drop or two of the same kind of blood from each. Then, to see whether the operation had been successful or not, he pricked me with the same in the arm, very near the vein that is usually opened in blood-letting, and, seeing no blood issue, he pronounced it satisfactory. I still felt, however, a fearful oppression of the lungs. To relieve this, he ran the pin obliquely into the pit of my stomach about two-thirds of its length. (This operation the Chinese call opening the mouth of the heart.) Not a drop of blood came out here, but in a moment I felt myself entirely relieved, my blood began its circulation, my natural warmth returned, and, after an hour of slight fever, I went about my avocations. This is the ordinary Chinese remedy. I have known it to be applied to five of our fathers in cholera, and it failed only once.—*Chinese Missionary in Civita Cattolica.*

CHAMBERS'S HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN WAR.

Now Publishing in Monthly Parts, price 1s. each.

It is the object of this Work to concentrate into one intelligible narrative the various records, personal and official, which now perplex the public, and by means of careful sifting and collation of evidence, and methodical arrangement of the parts of the subject, to produce a standard history of one of the most memorable conflicts that have ever convulsed the world. The narrative is profusely illustrated with Engravings, rendering the Work uniform with the improved issue of the PICTORIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND, now in course of publication. Sold by all Booksellers.

Printed and Published by W. and R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, London, and 339 High Street, Edinburgh. Also sold by JAMES FRASER, 14 D'Olier Street, Dublin, and all Booksellers.